



Dr. Chauncy's

# SERMON

ON

The *horrid Nature*, and *enormous*  
*Guilt*, of MURDER.



Cambridge University

Dr. Channing's

SERMON



The Jewish Nation, and enormous  
Guilt, of MURDER.

Cambridge University

The horrid Nature, and enormous  
Guilt of MURDER.

A

SERMON

Preached at the Thursday-Lecture in BOSTON,

November 19th. 1754.

The Day of the Execution of *William Wier*,

For the MURDER of *William Chism*.

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By *Charles Chauncy*, D. D. K.

One of the Pastors of the first Church in Boston.

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*Gen. 6. 9. Whoso sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood  
be shed; for in the Image of God made he Man.  
Numb. 35. 31.—Ye shall take no Satisfaction for the Life of a  
Murderer;—but he shall surely be put to Death.*

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BOSTON:  
Printed by *Thomas Fleet*, 1754.

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Guilt of MURDER.

A

# SERMON

Preached at the Anniversary of the Boston

Meeting, 1784.

The Day of the Execution of William Wier.

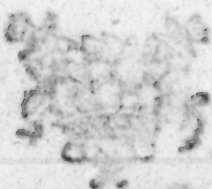
For the MURDER of William Wier.



By Charles D.D.

One of the Rectors of the City Church in Boston.

Gen. G. Wier's Address: "Blessed be God, who has made the world  
to be a theatre for the display of his glory, and the scene of  
his mercy." — "I have seen no sinners, but the righteous  
only; — and they have been put to death."



BOSTON:

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## The Scripture-Law against MURDER explained and enforced.

Matt. 19, 18. — *Jesus said, Thou shalt do no Murder.*

**T**HESE Words of our Lord Jesus Christ are quoted from the *sixth* of the *ten Commandments*, which God published from *Sinai*, in the hearing of the main Body of the *Jewish Nation*, and wrote on *two Tables of Stone*, that they might be a *standing perpetual Rule* for the Direction of their Conduct towards Him and one another. And as *all* these *Commandments* (the *Fourth* only excepted, and this only in part) are grounded on *Reason*, and not *meer positive Institution*, they are *universally obligatory*, so far as Mankind are under Advantages to become acquainted with them. This is particularly true of the *Commandment* I have just read to you; because it took rise from that *Fitness* and *Propriety* of Action, which is everlastingly due from Men towards each other, as they are *all of one Blood*, and endowed with the same *common Right* to the possession and enjoyment of *Life* here on Earth. And this *Commandment* is *eminently binding* upon us *Christians*, as it has been adopted by our great Master and Lord into *his Religion*, and makes one of the important *Laws* of *his Kingdom*. *Jesus said, Thou*

*Thou shalt do no Murder.* In discoursing to which Words, I shall endeavour two Things.

I. First, *Explain the Sense* in which we are here commanded to *do no Murder*.

II. Secondly, *Enforce the Command*, by representing the *horrid Nature*, and enormous *Guilt* of the *Sin of Murder*.

We shall then conclude the Discourse with the proper *Application*.

I. First, I am to *explain* the Command, *Thou shalt do no Murder*.

And it is plain, if one Man should slay another by *meer Chance*, as we vulgarly speak; that is, when he had no *Intention* to do it, nor any *Thought* of being the occasion of Hurt to him, in the least, it is a *Mis-hap* only, and not the *Crime* here cautioned against. Accordingly we find, that God himself, in this Case, frees a Man from *Guilt*, ordaining that he shall live. Deut. 19. 4, 5. *Whoso killeth his Brother ignorantly, whom he hated not in Time past, as when a Man goeth into the Wood with his Neighbour to hew Wood, and his Hand fetcheth a stroke with the Ax to cut down the Tree, and the Head slippeth from the Helve, and lighteth upon his Neighbour that he die, he shall — live.* Only, it ought to be remembred here, *Carelessness* is a *Fault*; and should we, in this Way, be the occasion, tho' accidentally, of the *Death* of another, we might have just reason for uneasy *Reflections* on ourselves; much more, if we were engaged in that which was in it self *unwarrantable* and *sinful*.

Again, If one Man should take away another's Life, in *necessary Self-Defence*; as when, by being suddenly and unavoidably assaulted, he is obliged to repel Force with Force,

## enormous Guilt, of MURDER.

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Force, or run the Risk of losing his own Life, he is not chargeable with the Sin of Murder. In Cases of this Sort, the Fault lies not with him that slays, but with him who is slain. The Man who was thus compelled to smite his Brother is innocent. There is indeed the Guilt of Blood; but it is wholly chargeable upon him who gave the occasion for exerting the unalienable Right, which Men have to preserve themselves. The Scripture therefore says, *Exod. 22. 2. If a Thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall be no Blood shed for him.* He is himself the proper sole Cause of this Evil; and ought therefore to be the only Sufferer for it. Tho' great Care should be taken, that Men do not needlessly expose themselves to the necessity of exerting their Right of Self-Defence: nor should they ever exert this Right, in this extreme Case, unless when the Necessity is real, and apparently unavoidable.

In like manner, Enemies may be slain in War, without any Breach of this Command: Always provided, the War is engaged in upon just and necessary Reasons; as, to redress Injuries, guard against Wrongs and Violence, and secure the Possession and Enjoyment of valuable Rights and Privileges; all other Methods having proved ineffectual. In this Case, it is rather a Virtue than a Crime, to be instrumental in curbing the Insolence of Enemies, and weakening their Strength to injure and oppress; tho' in the doing of it, Numbers of them should be slain. They are indeed the faulty Causes of their own Death. The opposing them with Force may properly be considered as an Act of publick Justice, and necessary Self-Defence; and those who are active herein, instead of being faulted, ought to be applauded: And the more successful they are in reducing such Enemies to Reason, or Destruction, the more worthy they are of Honour. But if Wars are come into merely to serve the Ends of Pride, Ambition, Avarice, or any other Lust, either of the Flesh or Mind, the Lives which are taken  
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away in such Wars are really so many horrid Murders. How far the immediate Instruments may be chargeable with Blame in God's Sight, may be difficult to determine; but it is, at once, evident, that their Employers, the Princes and Potentates of the Earth, are, in this Case, inhuman, cruel, barbarous Butchers of their Fellow-Men, and will be treated as such by the King of Kings, who respecteth not the Persons of Men; but will render to all, whether high or low, without favour or Affection, according to their Deeds, in the Day of the appearing of his Son Jesus Christ to judge the World in Righteousness.

In fine, If Men are put to Death for Capital Crimes by Authority from the Civil Magistrate, who is God's Minister, and holds the Sword for this very Purpose, it is not a Trespass upon my Text; but an act of publick Service, necessary for the well-being of Society; which could not subsist, if wicked and violent Men should be suffered, with Impunity, to invade the Rights of others, as their ungoverned Lusts might prompt them thereto.

These Cases being excepted, the Sin forbidden in this Commandment, is the voluntary taking away another's Life without Cause, or without a just and necessary one: Upon what Motive soever it is done, whether from Hatred, or Malice, or Envy, or Revenge, or presumed Safety, or pretended Reparation of Honour: Or, by what Means soever it be effected; whether by direct Violence, or fraudulent Contrivance; in an open, or clandestine Manner; immediately by ourselves, or by the Instrumentality of others. Or if Life should not be actually taken away, yet is this Commandment violated, at least, in the all seeing View of God, if it was endeavoured, and such Endeavour would have taken Effect, had it not been counter-acted by some unforeseen Turn or other in the Conduct of Providence; as in the Case of those, who entered into a Conspiracy to kill Paul, and laid

laid wait for him, in prosecution of this bloody Design, but were hindered, beyond their own Intention, from accomplishing it; *Acts* 23. 12, 14.

This now is the Crime which is here forbidden; and it is a *more* or a *less* aggravated one, in proportion to the *Circumstances* that attend it. If the *Design* upon another's Life was not *suddenly* excited; but took rise from *cool, deliberate, settled, Hatred and Malice*, it is *Murder* in the *gross*est Sense. Nor will the *Manner* in which it was committed make any considerable Difference in the *Degree of Guilt*. It is *Murder of the deepest Dye*.

It is *Murder* also, tho' in a *less* criminal Sense, when Life is taken away, not from a *settled Principle* of *calm and deliberate Malice*, but in consequence of *sudden Anger* heightened into *Rage and Fury*. What Allowances *human Laws*, under some Governments, may make for sudden Transports of *Passion*, and how far, in some Cases, they may be satisfied without the *Blood* of the guilty Person, I pretend not to determine; but, in true *Reason*, it is evidently *unfit*, that *Life* should be continually exposed to hazard, from the turbulent and ungoverned *Wrath of Men*. This would be to subject quiet and peaceable Members of Society to the greatest *Hardships*, by *constructively* giving Encouragement to *angry Men* to vent their *Fury* on them. It is plain, the possession of *Life* is not so strongly guarded and secured as it might be, and ought to be, in well regulated Society, if *passionate Men* may be indulged the Liberty of slaying their Neighbours; provided they are able to plead, they were in a *Fit of Rage*, not having the government of themselves, and not knowing what they did. This, at best, is only making one Crime an Excuse for another; which if allowed as valid, and sufficient to wipe off the *Guilt of Blood*, no one can enjoy his *Life* with safety. That *Anger* in-

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creasing into Rage, which hurries a Man on wickedly and injuriously to invade his Neighbour, and deprive him of Life, is *murderous* in the Eye of Reason, and in the Eye of God, and it is. Pity if it is not, in all Places, so esteemed, by the *Law of Man*. I now proceed,

II. In the second Place, to enforce the Command in my Text, by representing the *horrid Nature* of this Sin of Murder.

It is indeed one of the *blackest* and most *monstrous* Sins, and so esteemed both by God and Man.

It is mentioned by Name, in the sacred Writings, as a Sin which is eminently *hateful* to God. *Psalm 5. 6. The Lord will abhor the bloody Man. Prov. 6. 16, 17. Hands that shed innocent Blood are an Abomination to the Lord.* And he has accordingly testified his great Displeasure against this Sin, even from the Beginning of the World. That was his Language to Cain, the Son of the first Man that ever lived, upon having murdered his Brother Abel. *Gen. 4. 10, 11, 12. What hast thou done? The Voice of thy Brother's Blood crieth to me from the Ground. And now thou art cursed from the Earth, which hath opened her Mouth to receive thy Brother's Blood from thy Hand.—A fugitive and a Vagabond shalt thou be in the Earth.* An awful Punishment this! And well might Cain break forth, and say, as in the Words that next follow, *My Punishment is greater than I can bear!* It may be worthy Observation, The most awfully severe and extensive Judgment God, was ever pleased to visit this World of ours with, was its *Destruction* by a *Deluge of Water*, one Family only excepted; and the Reason is given, *Gen. 6. 11. Because the Earth was filled with Violence.* And it was to prevent such Violence in the new Generations that might proceed out of the Loins of Noah, that God made it a *standing perpetual Law.* *Gen. 9. 5, 6. At the Hand of every Man's Brother*  
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## enormous Guilt, of MURDER.

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ther will I require the Life of Man. *Whoso sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed.* And when he took upon himself the more special Government of the Nation of the Jews, he peremptorily annexed the Sentence of Death, to the Law against Murder. And that it might be known what Murder was, he says, concerning every Man that should kill his Neighbour, as in Numb. 35. 16. *And if he smite him with an Instrument of Iron, so that he die, he is a Murderer: The Murderer shall surely be put to Death.* It follows, in the next Verse, *And if he smite him with throwing a Stone, and he die: he is a Murderer: The Murderer shall surely be put to Death.* It is yet added in the following Verse, which may be worthy of Notice, upon this Occasion, *or if he smite him with a band-weapon of Wood (wherewith he may die) and he die; he is a Murderer: The Murderer shall surely be put to Death.* And it is farther observable, the Sovereign Lord of Life was pleased most solemnly, and in exprefs Words, to prohibit the taking any Satisfaction for the Life of a Murderer, as in the 30th and 31st Verses of this Chapter, *Whoso killeth any Person, the Murderer shall be put to Death—ye shall take no Satisfaction for the Life of a Murderer; but he shall surely be put to Death.* And that this Law might not be evaded, by the Flight of Murderers to any of the Cities of Refuge (a Number of which were appointed for the Protection of those, who tho' they had killed others, yet were not chargeable with Murder) he particularly ordained, Deut. 19. 12. *That they should be fetched thence, and delivered into the Hands of the Avenger of Blood, that they might die.*

But more than all this, the holy God, to signify his great Indignation against this Sin of Murder, has particularly rank'd it, in the Revelation of his Will by his Son Jesus Christ, among those Crimes which, if not repented of, will certainly be a Bar in the Way of Men's obtaining Life in Heaven, according to 1 John

3. 15. *No Murderer hath eternal Life; yea, he has mentioned it, by Name, as a Sin that will, without sincere Repentance, expose Men to the second Death, or, which means the same Thing, the Fire of Hell, according to Rev. 21. 8. Murderers shall have their Part in the Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone: which is the second Death.*

And as this Sin of *Murder* is thus singularly foul and black in the Esteem of God, so it is likewise in the Account of Man. It is indeed a Crime that is shocking to the human Mind, unless when abandoned to all Sense of what is right and fit: Nor are there many, however debauched in their Principles, and dissolute in their Manners, but would find within themselves uneasy Emotions of Soul at the Thought of committing a barbarous Murder; adopting the Language of *Hazael*, and saying, *Is thy Servant a Dog that he should do this Thing?* All civilized Nations have, as one, united in ranking Murder among the most enormous Crimes, and guarding against it by enacting Laws with the Sanction of Death. We know indeed of no People, however rude and uncultivated, in other Respects, but have entertained a kind of Horror at the Sin of Murder; judging it worthy of some remarkable Punishment. Hence the Barbarians, at *Melita*, reasoned among themselves, as in *Acts* 28. 4. *No doubt this Man is a Murderer, whom, tho' he hath escaped the Sea, yet Vengeance suffereth not to live.* And even Murderers themselves, when they come coolly to reflect upon what they have done, are commonly filled with great inward Remorse; turning upon themselves with the keenest resentments of their Folly. And should they escape the Vengeance of Man, they scarce ever after enjoy themselves, or take Comfort in Life. Their Hearts misgive them; their Thoughts trouble them; their guilty Fears perpetually haunt them: And sometimes, for the sake of Peace within, they have been, as it were, forced to reveal their own Wickedness;

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chusing rather to die by the *Hands of Justice*, than to drag on Life under the uneasy Sensations of a continually Self-condemning Conscience.

And it is upon *just and reasonable* Grounds, that *Murder* is thus reckoned by *God and Man* as one of the *blackest and most monstrous Crimes*, and felt to be so by *Murderers* themselves: For it carries in it, in an high Degree, *Uncharitableness, Injustice, and Impiety*; each of which are in themselves great Breaches upon the Law of *Nature and Religion*.

*Charity, or Love to our Neighbour* is the *second summary Commandment*; and like the first, which requires *Love to God*, it is great and important. On these two *Commandments hang the Law and the Prophets, the Gospel and the Apostles*. We are destitute of all *Virtue and Religion*, if we do not love *God*; and it is a vain Thing to pretend that we love *God*, if we love not our *Neighbour* also. For as the Apostle *John* speaks, *1 John 4. 20. If a Man says that he loves God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar; for he that loveth not his Brother, whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen.* And what stronger Evidence can a Man give, that he don't love his Brother, than embruing his Hands in his Blood? This is the strongest Proof of his being entirely void of that Christian Temper which is kind, and gentle, and peaceable, and apt to put one upon walking with all Lowliness, and Meekness, and Long-suffering; forbearing and forgiving one another in Love. To be sure, when one Man is urged on to slay another from *Hatred and Malice, deliberate and premeditated*, he discovers *Uncharitableness*, in the highest Degree; yea, *Inhumanity and Barbarity* reign in him, instead of *Good-Will and Christian Piety*. To hate a Brother to the Death is the utmost Pitch of Hatred. And if, in imitation of our Master and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, and out of respect to him, we ought to be

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willing to lay down our Lives for the Brethren, it must be a most enormous Breach of *Christian Charity* for a Man wilfully, and without Cause, to take away his Brother's Life.

*Judgment* is as weighty a matter of God's Law as Mercy; for the Lord our God hath particularly required it of us to do *Justice*. But the *Murderer* outrageously transgresseth the Rule of Right, invading his Neighbour's Property, in the most indisputable Case. For the Possession of Life is what he claims by *immediate Grant* from the great Sovereign of the Universe. And by invading this Right he does him the greatest possible Injury; for he deprives him of the most *valuable Good*. Nothing indeed, in all the World, is so precious as Life; for it is the *Foundation* of all other Enjoyments, and justly preferable to them all. The Father of Lies therefore spake Truth, when he said, as in *Job 2. 9. Skin for Skin, all that a Man hath will he give for his Life*. Nor can the Loss of it be repaired or compensated. He that loseth his Life, loseth therewith all future Capacity of Enjoyment in this World, without any Possibility of recovering it again. It is therefore the highest and most aggravated Injury that can be done to a Man to take away his Life unjustly. It, in a manner, infinitely surpasses every other Evil, whether in Name, Estate, or bodily Welfare in any Kind; for these "have their Measure, and may be capable of some "Reparation: But this is altogether extreme and irreparable."

Besides it ought to be remembered here, when a Man wickedly slays his Brother, he not only, at once, turns him out of all Capacity of enjoying any farther Good in this World, but deprives him of the Time he might otherwise have had to make Preparation for *another World*, and may be the *Means* of his being tormented, instead of comforted there. The *Murderer* of his Brother

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ther not only robs him of his *temporal Life*, and all *temporal Good* therewith; but of his *Space for Repentance*, and Opportunity to make his Peace with God, and to get into good Terms with Heaven: And if he should suddenly dispatch him into the other World, and in his Sins too, as, it may be feared, is too often the Case, he is, in a Sense, the Murderer of his *Soul*, as well as *Body*, and may properly be charged with bringing upon him the *second*, as well as the *first Death*. A very serious and awful Truth this! And if it were duly attended to, might, under the Blessing of God, be happily influential to restrain from the horrid Sin of *Murder*. It is not confined, in its Consequences, to the present World; but may prove *injurious* to our poor innocent Brother, innocent as to us, beyond the Grave, in the *Resurrection World*. Many a poor Sinner, it may be feared, by the Murder of his *Body*, has been *virtually* and *constructively* murdered in his *Soul* also. And shall we dare venture upon the Commission of a Crime which may be the *immediate Occasion* of the *Damnation* of our Brother? Shall we not rather keep at the utmost Distance from that Act of *Injustice*, towards our Brother, which, together with destroying his *Body*, may be the *Means* of destroying his *Soul in Hell*?

I may still add here, the *Injustice* involved in the Sin of *Murder*, affects others besides the Man himself that is turned out of Life. His *Relations*, especially *near* ones are greatly *injured*; as hereby those *natural Passions* are awakened, which occasion the keenest Sense of Pain, and, many Times, abiding Sorrow of Heart, such as they are never freed from on this Side the Grave. Besides which, they are deprived of the *Advantage* they might have received from him, upon whom, under God, they chiefly depended for their comfortable Subsistence in Being. The Wife of a Man's Bosom is sometimes, by this *injurious Sin*, at once subjected, not merely to the Solitude of a widowed Life, but to unknown Difficulties,

facilities, Anxieties, and Hardships consequent thereupon; while, at the same Time, his Children are reduced to the State of poor helpless Orphans, without a Guide to their Youth, or, it may be, any Means to provide for their Education, and future Welfare in the World.—But God only knows all the *Injuries* which are connected with this unjust Act of taking away another's Life.—Whole Families have been ruined by it; yea, in its unhappy Consequences, it may have been the Means of their Ruin in another World, as well as this.—Moreover, the *Public* is highly injured by the Sin of *Murder*, as well as the murdered Person himself, and his *Relatives*. It loses one of its Members, and, together herewith, all the Service it might have reaped from one in his Place, in the Improvement of his Time and Talents, for promoting the general Good. And, as the Case may be, and sometimes really has been, the Injury, in this Respect, rises high, and proves an irreparable Damage.—Such *Injustice* is involved in the Sin of *Murder*.

It argues also *Impiety* against God, and to a great Degree; for it is a downright Encroachment upon, and Usurpation of, that *Right over Life*, which the Sovereign Lord of the Universe has reserved to be exercised by himself only, or by his *Vice-gerents* in certain Cases, wherein the Good of Society may make it necessary.—And it is, in another Respect, an high Indignity offered to God; for it dispossesses him of his just Property, by virtually robbing him of a Creature whom his Hands have formed; yea, of a *Servant* and *Subject*, from whom he might have received a Revenue of Honour and Service. Besides all which, it is a *destroying of that Image of God* which every Man naturally bears. And it was indeed for this Reason, in special, that the *Statute* against *Murder*, in the Days of *Noah*, was guarded by God himself with the Sanction of *Death*. So we read, *Gen. 6. 9. Whoso sheddeth Man's Blood,*

*Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed; for in the Image of God made he Man. The Man who murderously sheds another's Blood, is not thought fit, by the Wisdom of the Supreme Legislator, to live any longer on the Earth; because he hereby heinously affronts God, by throwing Contempt on the noblest Work of his Hands, that which he made after his own Likeness, in his own Image.*

So that, upon the whole, this Sin of *Murder* appears to be one of the foudest and blackest Crimes, of very heinous and complicated Guilt. It is at once a Sin against God and Man. It virtually usurps God's sovereign Authority, his Throne of Justice, his Sword of Vengeance; and it does the highest Injustice to Man, both in his private Capacity, and as related in Society.

The Application yet remains.

And from the Representation I have given of the Sin of *Murder*, in its horrid Nature, and enormous Guilt, let us detest it in our Hearts, and keep at the utmost Distance from it in our Practice. I speak not thus from an Apprehension, as tho' there was any one here present, upon whom this inhuman Crime could be justly fastened, even by their own Consciences, or the God who knoweth all Things: I would rather hope, the Idea of this Sin, is, in all our Minds, so associated with Dread and Horror, that we should tremble at the Thought of committing it. But we are yet in the Body, and within the Reach of Danger; not knowing what Temptations may befall us. It cannot therefore be improper, upon suitable Occasions, to put us upon our Guard, by calling our Attention to the Counsels and Warnings of God against *Murder*. And it is the rather seasonable at this Time, as the public Vengeance will, by God's Leave, in the Afternoon, be executed upon the poor unhappy Man under Sentence of Death for this atrocious Crime.

He has had a fair Trial conformably to the *Law* of the Land; and as, upon a full hearing of his Case, it very evidently appeared, that he had *murderously shed Man's Blood*, it is right and fit, that *by Man his Blood should be shed*. Our Hearts may possibly relent towards him; we may be disposed, from the working of natural Pity, to wish he might be permitted to live, and not obliged to die: But the great Governour of the World, who is *infinitely* merciful, but, at the same Time, *wisely* so, has said, *Deut. 19. 13. Thine Eye shall not Pity him*; that is, so as to save him from Death: *Thou shalt put away innocent Blood from Israel*; that is, by shedding the Blood of the Murderer. Instead therefore of such Pity as will not consist with the *Will of God*, and those *human Laws* which are founded thereon, as well as on the *common Good* of Society; let us rather discover our Christian Compassion and Love by carrying his Case to the Throne of Grace, humbly and earnestly beseeching the Father of Mercies to make the *Destruction of his Flesh* the *Means* of Salvation to his *Soul*. Thanks be to God, this is possible. Even Murderers may, by fleeing to *Christ*; in the Exercise of Repentance, and Faith, and a submissive Temper of Mind, be secure from the Avenger of Blood, the Sanction of the Divine Law, as it respects the future invisible World. In this *City of Refuge*, of God's own Appointment, there is a safe Retreat, not only for the *Manslayer*, but the *wilful Murderer* also, however complicated, however aggravated his Guilt has been; and having fled to it, he may hope for the Favour of his Judge, an Acquittance at the Bar of the coming Judgment, and an Admission to dwell with God in happy Life for ever. We unitedly bow the Knee to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, humbly and earnestly supplicating this Mercy for the *poor Criminal*, who must this Day pass thro' *temporal Death*. May he *fear God*, since he is in this *Condemnation*; and acknowledge

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ledge it to be just, for that he receives the due Reward of his wicked Deed, in slaying his innocent Brother. And may he be enabled penitently to apply to the once crucified, but now enthroned Jesus, to remember him in his Kingdom: And may the compassionate Saviour of Men, who also is their King and Judge, say to him, as to the Malefactor that was crucified with him, *This Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*

And we all heartily wish and pray, that he may die thus penitently and comfortably, for the sake of his distressed Relatives, as well as his own. This, if any Thing; This, more than any Thing, would mitigate their Grief, and compose their Minds to Silence and Submission under this heavy Rebuke of Heaven, if they favour the Things of God and Religion; as we hope they do.

The Case of the poor Woman, who will be left this Day a sorrowful Widow, under peculiarly striking Circumstances, is truly pitiable: Nor do we blame her, if, in the Agonies of her Grief, she has taken to her Words, and said, *Have Pity upon me, have Pity upon me, O my Friends, for the Hand of the Lord hath touched me!* May she be enabled suitably to cast this afflictive Burden on the Lord, and find his everlasting Arms underneath, sustaining and supporting her! May that God, who pities those who hope in his Mercy, as a Father pities his Children, pity her distressed Case, comfort her Heart, sanctify this Calamity to her, and make it turn out to her Spiritual and everlasting Good!

May the poor innocent Children also, innocent of this great Crime for which their Father ignominiously suffers Death, find Favour with him who has said, *All Souls are mine; as the Soul of the Father, so also*

*the Soul of the Son is mine. The Soul that sinneth it shall die:—The Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father. And may they find favour with Man likewise. Let none cast it cruelly in their Teeth, that their Father died a Murderer. Let none think, or speak, the worse of them, on this Account; but be rather disposed to exercise all Christian Offices of Love and Tenderness towards them; as their Circumstances eminently bespeak the Compassion of all. And may they understand, and hearken to, the Voice of God in this awful Providence, which loudly calls upon them, not to forsake him, lest he should forsake them, and leave them to reap the Consequences of their own Folly, even in this World, as far as Death, with public Ignominy.*

We cordially mourn with the *aged Parents* of this unhappy Man. The Occasion of their Grief is truly bitter. What Consolations in Christ do they stand in need of? Can we who are *Parents*, put our Souls in their Souls stead, and not mingle our Tears with theirs? If we have any Bowels, they cannot but be moved within us. Let it be our ardent Prayer to the God who dwelleth on high, that he would send the *Comforter* to dwell in their Hearts, that this Burden, added to that of *Age*, may not bear too hard upon them. He only can relieve their Souls. And if he shall please to undertake for their Help, this Stroke of his Hand, severe as it is, shall only serve for the Trial of their Faith, and Hope, and Patience, and Subjection to the Father of Spirits; which Graces, being proved to be *more precious than Gold that perisheth*, tho' it should be tried with Fire, shall be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory, at the appearance of *Jesus Christ*; for this is that which he hath said, and on which he hath caused us to hope, *Blessed are they which endure Affliction; for when they are tried, they*

*they shall receive the Crown of Life, which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

But *Relatives* and *Friends* are not the only Persons who should mourn upon this Occasion. If they mourn, as being themselves *sufferers*; we should mourn, because God's Law hath been transgressed, his Name dishonoured, his Image destroyed, and such Guilt contracted as cries for Vengeance, and will *defile the whole Land*, if it be not removed by *shedding of Blood*; so *inhuman*, so *foul*, so *black*, so *enormous*, is the Sin of *Murder*! It should sensibly touch our Hearts with Grief, when any are left of God to be thus *impious* and *unjust*; and the tremendous Consequence of such Guilt, even in this World, should fix in our Minds a *detestation* and *dread* of it, that no Temptation shall be ever able, by divine Help, to overcome.

And this is the great Thing aimed at, both by *God* and *Man*, in *publicly* taking away the Life of *Murderers*. For as this Punishment puts a Period to their Existence in the present World, it is final; and can't be intended for their *future better Conduct*, but for the *Restraint of others*, by awakening their Attention, by striking their Minds with Awe, and guarding them, thro' the Influence of the Passion of Fear, against the Force of the Temptations they may meet with to transgress in this Kind. To this Purpose is that in *Deut.* 13. 11. *And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such Wickedness.* It was Wickedness punishable with Death that is here spoken of. It is therefore said, in the immediately foregoing Verses, concerning the Man, whoever he was, that should be guilty of this Wickedness, *Thine Hand shall be upon him to put him to Death.—Thou shalt Stone him with Stones till he dies.* And why was he to be thus awfully punished? Evidently, for the *public Good*, for the Benefit of all *Israel*,

22      The *horrid Nature*, and

*Israel*, to alarm their Fear, and put them upon their Guard, to do no more such *Wickedness*.

And this is the Design of this Day's Execution. It is intended for the *common Good*, by exhibiting an Example of *public Vengeance*: Such an one as is fitted to curb the Lusts of Men, and prevent their breaking forth in *murderous Attempts* upon the Life of their Neighbour. We should view it in this Light, and be deterred from *that Crime* which will expose us to be cut off by the Hand of *civil Justice*.

There are doubtless many here present, who design to be among the numerous Spectators of the tragical End of this unhappy Criminal.—Be advised not to make this melancholy Sight a Matter of *vain Curiosity*; much less of *Sport* and *Merriment*. It is capable of a wise and good Use; and you may receive lasting Advantage herefrom. Be serious, considerate.—Recollect the Hazard you may have been in of committing this Sin; and, in pious Ejaculations, acknowledge the Kindness of God in the Restraints of Providence which may have preserved you.—Be in the Exercise of the last Office of Love and Pity towards this condemned Man, by giving Vent to the Breathings of your Souls in silent Applications to the Throne of Mercy, on his Behalf, in this Time of his greatest Need. And, in a Word, let it be your sincere Endeavour to get your Hearts impressed with a deep Sense of Sin, of the Sin of *Murder* in particular. Detest it from the Bottom of your Souls, and resolve within yourselves, in the Strength of Divine Grace, that you will, thro' your whole future Life, take Care that you be not drawn aside to commit so heinous a Transgression. And that your Resolution may be *effectual* for your Restraint,

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Be upon your Guard against all the *Tendencies* towards this Sin, such as *Anger, Wrath, Hatred, Malice, Envy, Revenge*; together with their immediate Effects, *contumelious and despitiful Language, Quarrellings and Fightings*. If we do not keep our selves from the governing Influence of these *Occasions* of the Sin of *Murder*, we shall live in continual Hazard of being betrayed unto it, to our *own*, as well as the Dishonour of God.

Especially would I put you upon your Guard against *outrageous Anger*; as it was owing to rash, impetuous, wild Passion, that this poor Man was hurried into the Sin for which he is condemned to die. If we are of a hasty Spirit, and given to Anger, we should fear what may be the Consequence, and lay the Restraints of Reason and Religion upon this unruly Passion. We should watch against the first Risings of Anger, and check it in its Beginnings, lest, as it gains Strength, it should get beyond Government, put us out of Possession of our selves, and be the Occasion of our doing that, which may bring us to public Shame in this World, and hazard our Salvation in the next.

But above all, let me advise you not to suffer your selves to be easy, 'till you are the *Subjects* of that Faith which *worketh by Love*, Love to God, Love to Christ, and Love to one another. This, more than any Thing, more than every Thing, will put us out of Danger of injuriously treating our Neighbour, at least, in any high Degree. If we love God and Jesus Christ, and, from Love to them, love our Brother also, we shall then be so far from being under the undue Influence of Hatred, Anger, Wrath, Malice, Envy, and the other Lusts of the Flesh or Mind, that we shall be disposed to all the Offices of Kindness and Goodness to all Men. We shall be full of Mercy and good Fruits. We shall walk in all Lowliness, and Meekness, and Forbearance;

Forbearance; being ready to forgive one another, as God for Christ's sake forgiveth us. If any should curse, we shall be ready to bless; if any should revile, we, instead of reviling again, shall leave our Case with God, who judgeth righteously, and instead of being overcome with Evil, we should overcome Evil with Good. And being thus fitted in the Temper of our Minds for the Society of Angels and glorified Saints, we shall, in God's Time, be admitted to dwell with them in that World, where there is no Variance nor Strife, but everlasting Peace and Concord, and those mutual Offices of Love and Friendship, which will make us the Delight of one another, and the Delight of God, from whose Presence will flow to us Rivers of Pleasure for evermore. God grant it may be the Portion of us all, for his Mercy's Sake, in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

T H E E N D.



